



United States
Department of Agriculture

Office of the Chief Information Officer

DR 3300-014

Commercial Wireless Technologies in USDA – Acquisition

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL NOTICE		Number: 3300-014
SUBJECT: Commercial Wireless Technologies in USDA - Acquisition	DATE: May 17, 2005	
	OP: Office of the Chief Information Officer, Telecommunications Policy and Planning Division	
CODIFICATION/EXPIRATION: This Notice will expire one year from the date it is signed, unless rescinded or canceled earlier.		

1 PURPOSE

This Departmental Notice (DN) establishes Departmental procedures for the acquisition of wireless technologies in the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). It also identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Agencies and Staff Offices for their implementation.

2 POLICY

The USDA will promote the most cost-effective use of commercial wireless technology; encourage coordinated acquisition planning and the use of blanket purchase agreements; centralized purchasing processes; and shared usage plans to reduce costs and support the USDA enterprise architecture. Agencies and Staff Offices shall first consider commercial services and existing Government contracts before exploring alternative options when fulfilling requirements for wireless technologies. In order to better control wireless technology purchases and assure proper oversight of telecommunications equipment, Agencies and Staff Offices will assign and train Designated Agency Representatives (DAR-Ds), or representatives designated by the Agency or Staff Office Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO) to place orders. Agencies and Staff Offices will comply with USDA and Federal acquisition policies and OCIO waiver requirements, and implement the procedures found in Section 7 of this DN when purchasing wireless technologies.

3 BACKGROUND

USDA agencies and staff offices are increasingly using wireless technologies for business operations. Recent audits indicate that many USDA wireless service plans are either underutilized or exceed monthly allowable charges, resulting in higher costs. Therefore, USDA is taking necessary steps to acquire services in a manner in which it aligns service plans with actual business requirements. In addition, USDA needs to acquire wireless assets in a manner that leverages volume purchases through establishment of Business Purchase Agreements (BPAs) for cost effectiveness, and promotes standardization for efficiency.

4 SCOPE

This notice applies to all USDA agency and staff office personnel, including non-government personnel authorized to use USDA wireless networks.

It applies to all commercial wireless devices, services and technologies that transmit voice and data including video. This also includes portable electronic devices (PED) such as laptop computers with wireless capability, cellular/personal communications system (PCS) devices, personal digital assistants (PDA), paging devices, Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID), fixed telemetry devices, and any other commercial wireless devices capable of storing, processing, or transmitting information. Services include Wireless Local Area Network (LAN), Wireless Wide Area Network (WWAN), and Personal Area Network (PAN). This policy does not address classified communications.

5 REFERENCES

USDA, *Office of Procurement and Property Management, Agriculture Acquisition Regulation Advisory (AGAR 58), Prohibition on Using Purchase Cards or Convenience Checks to Acquire Telecommunications*. December 10, 2003.

USDA, *Office of the Chief Information Officer, Draft Departmental Notice, DN 3300-013, Commercial Wireless Technologies in USDA – Unclassified Security Requirements for Wireless Devices*. November 12, 2004.

General Services Administration, *Federal Acquisition Policy Division, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), subpart 13.303, Blanket Purchase Agreements*. July 19, 2004.

US Congress, *Information Technology Management Reform Act (ITMRA or the Clinger-Cohen Act)*. 1996.

US Congress, *Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994*.

US Congress, *Chief Financial Officers Act of 1996*.

US Congress, *Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996*.

US Congress, *Federal Manager's Financial Integrity Act of 1982*.

US Congress, *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*.

6 DEFINITIONS

- a Blanket Purchase Agreement. Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) are a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for services and products with qualified sources of supply. BPAs are "charge accounts" that ordering offices establish with contractors to provide themselves with an easy ordering tool.
- b Commercial Service. Any product that is designed for a large market, intended to be for profit, and is available to the general public. Devices, services and technologies commercially procured and intended for use in commercial and unlicensed frequency bands.
- c Departmental Waiver Process. USDA's Information Technology (IT) approval process for IT purchases exceeding \$25K.
- d Designated Agency Representative (DAR). DARs are designated by the Chief Information Officer or the lead Information Technology Officer within each agency or staff office in coordination with the agency/staff office Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO). DARs are delegated authority under USDA's Departmental Regulation 3300-001 to place orders for telecommunications products and services on behalf of the agencies or staff offices they represent. Telecommunications Services and Operations within the Office of the Chief Information Officer establishes ordering limitations and guidance for USDA DARs within the context of authorized, pre-existing contracts that clearly state delegations of authority and terms. In order to be authorized to place orders, DARs must complete vendor training associated with a General Services Administration (GSA) contract (e.g. FTS2001/Networx).
- e Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) System. The Federal Acquisition Regulations system established for the codification and publication of uniform policies and procedures for acquisition by all executive agencies. The Federal Acquisition Regulations System consists of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), which is the primary document, and agency acquisition regulations that implement or supplement the FAR. The FAR System does not include internal agency guidance of the type described in 1.301(a)(2).

- f Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN). WLANs use radio waves for transmission and are generally connected through access points to an existing wired infrastructure, although they may be standalone as well. They provide authorized users access to resources that are not physically connected to their client device.

7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a OCIO-TSO will in cooperation with the Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM), the Office of the Financial Officer (OCFO), and the Office of Budget and Planning Analysis (OBPA) where appropriate:

- (1) Establish Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA) s consistent with the USDA Enterprise Architecture (EA) for wireless products and services to:
 - (a) Promote economy of scale savings.
 - (b) Promote the adoption of standard equipment and services to improve interoperability.
 - (c) Promote the adoption of standardized billing processes and customer support by USDA vendors.
- (2) Provide customer support to agencies and staff offices regarding Department-level contracts for products and services as applicable.
- (3) Make information available regarding the services available through OCIO-TSO, and the associated pricing.
- (4) Represent the Department to commercial wireless telecommunications providers and equipment manufacturers.
- (5) Represent the Department to oversight agencies on commercial wireless telecommunications products and services.
- (6) Establish Department-wide acquisition processes for Telecommunications products and services.
- (7) Establish guidance on the use of specific payment systems.

- b Agencies and Staff Offices will:

- (1) Follow Departmental guidelines for the acquisition of all commercial wireless telecommunications products and services.
- (2) Consider the use of existing USDA or Government-wide contracts consistent with USDA Enterprise Architecture (EA) such as those offered by the General Services Administration or OCIO-approved Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) before establishing a new contract.
 - (a) Agencies require OCIO approval to establish a Blanket Purchase Agreement for wireless products and services.
 - (b) Requests should be made to the USDA Associate Chief Information Officer for Telecommunications.

- (3) Where possible, purchase commercial wireless products and services that conform to OCIO established standards to promote standardized use throughout the Department.
- (4) Establish procedures whereby wireless equipment and services are ordered only by Agency or Staff Office Designated Agency Representatives (DAR-D)s, or representatives designated by the Agency or Staff Office Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO).

NOTE: Purchases by individuals other than DAR-Ds or representatives designated by a TMACO are not permitted.

- (5) Where economic benefits are realized, encourage the purchase of shared usage plans as appropriate for supporting operational requirements.
- (6) Establish a process for the acquisition of wireless equipment that requires the approval of the Agency or Staff Office Information Systems Security Program Manager (ISSPM).
- (7) Comply with the provisions of USDA's *Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) Advisory 58* regarding the *Prohibition on Using Purchase Cards or Convenience Checks To Acquire Telecommunications*, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) guidelines.
- (8) To the maximum extent possible, purchase commercially available wireless equipment and services.
- (9) Coordinate wireless planning internally and with other Agencies and Staff Offices to reduce duplication of effort and control costs, integrate wireless technologies, enhance interoperability, and improve services and capabilities. Agencies shall acquire or use wireless technologies in a manner that promotes interoperability among Agencies and the Department through the use of industry and government standards. Leveraging volume for discounts is encouraged.
- (10) Submit written requests directly to the Telecommunications Policy and Planning Division (TPPD) of Telecommunications Services and Operations (TSO) for the approval of all purchases over \$2,500 and under \$25K.
- (11) Enter all purchases regardless of the dollar amount into an inventory database approved by National Telecommunications Services and Operations (NTSO). See DN - 015 on Asset Management.
- (12) Submit acquisitions exceeding \$25K according to current Departmental procedures found at: <http://www.ocionet.usda.gov/ocio/waivers/itprocess.html>. Procurements of high dollar amount, visibility, and/or risk may require other departmental approvals such as those prescribed in USDA's Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) processes. Information regarding the CPIC process can be found at: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/cpic/index.html>.
- (13) Submit all requests between \$2,500, and \$25,000 with the following information:
 - (a) A description of the wireless equipment and services. Provide a justification for the purchase, and address the consequences if the acquisition is not approved.

- (b) If equipment or services support a Wireless Wide, Metropolitan, Local or Personal Area Network (WWAN, WLAN, MMAN, WPAN), the location(s) for the installation of equipment or services must be provided. This should include the room numbers, city and state (E911 address) where the items will be primarily used.
- (c) If the request is for a wireless network, describe the level of compliance to USDA standards according to DN 3300-012.
- (d) If the request is for a wireless network, estimate peak hour traffic projections for each wireless access point and describe the anticipated impact on the agency and USDA Wide Area Network.
- (e) Fixed and recurring service charges for each software and hardware component.
- (f) Describe how wireless will be integrated with other networks.

Requests should be emailed to Wireless.TPPD@USDA.gov. Telephone inquiries can be made at: (202) 694-5980.

8 INQUIRIES

Direct all questions concerning this notice to the Telecommunications Policy and Planning Division (TPPD), Telecommunications Services and Operations, Office of the Chief Information Officer.